1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

pennant, and the Wanderers, which draws from the permanent native population in Darwin and includes such Tiwi as Bobby Wilson. It is normal for one of these Tiwi players to be considered among the top three in Darwin football circles.

For a while, Edmund, a Tiwi from Bathurst Island Mission, was one of the players on the newly organized St. Mary's basketball team; other Tiwi have played on the Bagot Compound basketball team. Billy Larrakeyah, a Darwin Tiwi, was thought to have Olympic potentialities as a javelin thrower, but strained his arm in the try-outs.[6] Most recently, a group of young Catholic Tiwi has been organized into a water polo team called the Seals. National magazines suggest that they may be the best water polo team in the country, but so far they have not gone south to play any non-Darwin group.

Tiwi carving and painting have had recent popularity in Australian art circles. Traditional Tiwi graveposts are finely carved in geometric designs and painted with precise and complex networks of cross-hatching and other simple, but effective, motifs. The first modern innovation in Tiwi art occurred about 1945 when a native known as Katu (or Short Katu) made his first attempt to carve a human figure atop a mourning post. When Pilling later asked Katu why he had carved this post, he said, "Me see 'm along Darwin. Me savvy." That is, Katu transferred the concept of Western realistic statuary in the round into the Tiwi art form. He carved a second realistic post for presentation to Queen Elizabeth II in 1954. More recently, Tiwi carvers at Snake Bay have taken to realistic carving. Two figurines, both carved by Tiwi at Snake Bay, were given to the Perth Museum in 1958. Sixteen mourning posts from Snake Bay were purchased by the National Art Gallery in Sydney the same year. An art display of Tiwi carving has been held in the United States in Philadelphia.

Tiwi have received recognition in the Northern Territory for other art forms. One of the thirty-year-old female Tiwi at Bathurst Island Mission usually takes first prize for embroidery at the annual Territorial fair. There has also been interest shown by outsiders in the double-barbed ceremonial spears. Male Tiwi skill in dancing has attracted wide attention in Australia. When natives from all over the Territory were sent to dance before Queen Elizabeth in Queensland during her 1954 tour, three Tiwi were among the delegation. The Tiwi contingent, directed by the innovator Short Katu, made every news story covering this part of the Royal Visit. In Darwin, when Bagot Compound needs to raise money for native participation in sports, the Tiwi, usually led by Katu, present a public dance. As a result, Katu's clan under his direction has invented many new dances for white Australian audiences.

Perhaps we may look forward to the day when American television audiences can enjoy such a Tiwi dance, one of Australia's best native products. Yet only sixty years ago, and therefore in the lifetime of many people still living, very few Tiwi had even seen a white man, and white men who set foot on Tiwi soil, like Cooper in his first attempt in 1897, were ferociously chased out.

[6] He was killed in a brawl in Darwin in the spring of 1959.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
OI20 Tiwi OI20

765 778 Pl. 32 illustrates a number of objects used in the *pukamuni* and *kulama* rituals.

[411] [531] Pl. 32A, B, are two of the beautifully carved ceremonial spears known respectively as the male *pukamuni* spear, *tunkaringa*, and the female spear, *tunkaguni*. These are made purely as a gift to the dead, they appear to have no other function.

[114] [322] [412] At the time of Spencer's visit to Melville Island during 1911, the aborigines told him that these spears were cut with cockle shells. During 1920 a Melville Island man in Darwin gave me the same information, adding that the making of a double-sided female spear, 32B, with shell tools occupied an old man about three months, and the single-sided male spear, 32A, about two.

Pl. 32C is the forked throwing stick, *miluanta*, with which *Tjapara*, the moon-man injured *Purukupali*, and 32D, the plain throwing stick, *muruguna*. These are used in the *kulama* and *pukamuni* rituals, as well as for hunting and in personal quarrels.

[302] [413] Pl. 32E, G, are two interesting tools called *portas*, used for printing lines of dots on the bodies of the men and women. The colour is crushed to a thin paste, spread on a flat rock, and the *porta* rocked backward and forward in the paint to load the *porta*. The *porta* is then rocked on the body printing a line of dots.[96]

[515] [413] Pl. 32F is a curious ceremonial scratching stick used by the *Kilipaniati kulama* initiate to scratch himself during the period when he is not allowed to do so with his hands.

Pl. 32H, J, are two burial poles, *tudinis*, which were erected on the grave. These will be described in Section 10.

9. THE MESSAGE STICKS

202 765 Message sticks, under the general name of *purumkita*, are used by the Tiwi for several purposes; personal requests to fellow tribesmen asking for presents or supplies (Fig. 5E); invitations to other groups to perform ceremonies (Fig. 5F, G, H), and in association with the *pukamuni* rituals.

When the ceremonial leader appointed the "workers" to cut the poles (p. 74), he also sent messengers carrying specially carved sticks (*purumkitas*) to each totemic group on Melville and Bathurst Islands, telling them when the final *pukamuni* rituals were about to start.

[301] [302] As each messenger neared his destination he painted himself entirely in white and donned his goose-feather ball, *tokwianga*, his chest ornaments,

[96] The lines of dots on *Wurarkui* (frontispiece) were made with a *porta*.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
OI20 Tiwi OI20

tobacco, *b*, matches, *c*, a pipe, *d*, a calico loin cloth, *e*, a pair of short trousers, *f*, a shirt, *g*, sugar, *h*, tea, and *j*, flour.

Secular

Fig. 60 is a carved stick whose designs were thought out by the artist as he walked along the sandy beach near our camp. Although not a message stick, the illustration is included in the section as an example of how an aboriginal expresses his mental images through the medium of simple wood carving.

The horizontal lines, *a*, *a*, symbolize the waves breaking on the beach, and the groups of short lines, a pattern of shallow gutters which had been formed on the sandy shore by the fresh water seeping from a nearby lagoon.

10. THE BURIAL POLES

The painted and decorated poles of Melville and Bathurst Islands attracted the attention of all the early visitors. Sir Gordon Bremer in 1824, possibly the first European to see the *pukamuni* poles, when writing about a grave he saw on Melville Island, states: "The situation was one of such perfect retirement and repose that it displayed considerable feeling in the survivors who placed it there and the simple order which pervaded the spot would not have disgraced a civilised people. It was an oblong square open at the foot, the remaining end and sides being railed around with trees, 7 feet to 8 feet high, some of which were carved with stone or shell and further ornamented by rings of wood. On the tops of these were placed the waddies (throwing sticks) of the deceased. The grave was raised above the level of the earth, but the raised part was not more than 3 feet long. At the head was placed a piece of a canoe (probably a bark basket) and a spear and round the grave were several little baskets made of the fan-palm leaf, which, from their small size, we thought had been placed there by the children of the departed. Nothing could exceed the neatness of the whole; the sand and earth were cleared away from the sides and not a shrub or weed was suffered to grow within the area."[66]

I have quoted Sir Gordon Bremer's description in full because it shows that, even after a hundred and thirty years, the aborigines of Melville Island,

[66] Bremer, 1843. From this description it would appear that Bremer chanced to see a grave not long after the aborigines had completed the final rituals. Had any time elapsed the whole area would have been covered with grass and leaves, for, after the *pukamuni* ceremonies, nobody is interested in either the grave or the poles.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
OI20 Tiwi OI20

elaborately shaped nor decorated, often being covered with no more than a series of dots.[1]

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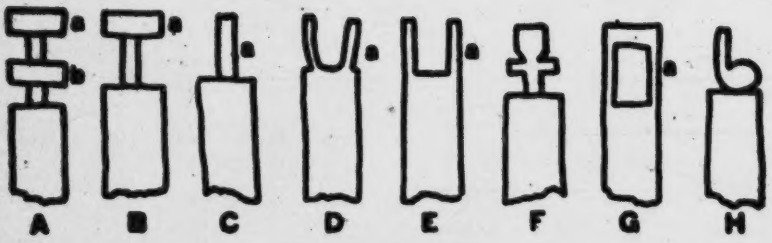

FIG. 8. *The Burial Poles*

Origin of the Pukamuni Poles

At present we have no evidence to show whether the custom of erecting burial poles around the grave in such numbers, not as a memorial, but as a gift to the dead, is confined entirely to the Tiwi tribe, or whether it is used in any other part of the world, and has reached the Tiwi by diffusion. There certainly are no similar burial poles on the Australian continent.

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In north-eastern Arnhem Land, some of the decorated log coffins are as high as seven feet.[2] But the function of those coffins bears no relationship to that of the burial poles of Melville Island, the former being no more than coffins to hold the bones, and the latter, gifts to please the spirit of the dead.

It is possible that, during the long period of isolation from the mainland cultures, the Melville Islanders may have changed coffins of north-eastern Arnhem Land into the burial poles of the Tiwi.

The only examples of burial posts outside of Australia known to me, that are in any way comparable in function to those on Melville Island, are the *malanggan* burial ornaments of New Ireland described by Kramer.[3]

Methods of Manufacture

Although, at the conclusion of the *pukamuni* rituals, the grave is totally neglected and the poles allowed to decay, the "workers", using steel axes[4]

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[1] Although *Tjamalampua* is not fully correct (see Bremer's and Campbell's statement in the early nineteenth century, pp. 107, 108), it indicates that both the poles and their painted decorations have, with the passing of the years, and the acquisition of steel tools, become more complex.

[2] Mountford, 1956, p. 317. [3] Kramer, 1925.

[4] The evidence of Bremer, Spencer and the aborigines, suggests that before the advent of metal the only cutting tools owned by the aborigines would have been crude stone axes, and the shells of cockles. It is likely that, under these conditions, the poles would

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2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
OI20 Tiwi OI20

765 and the hardest and most durable timber available, spared no pains to make the best poles they could.[8]

X 532 765 When the "workers" had finished shaping the poles they notified the leader of the *pukamuni* ceremony, who then gave the order for the poles to be scorched over a fire of blazing leaves to make a black ground on which to paint the design (Mountford, 1956, p. 427). Then, setting up the poles in a double row near the grave (Mountford, 1956, p. 426), the men began their task of decoration (Pl. 33B, D). At the same time, the ceremonial leader sent message sticks (p. 98) to notify the outlying groups that the final rituals were about to start.

386 The materials used for decoration were: red and yellow ochres from Imilu, Cape Van Diemen, a white ochre from a beach nearby, crushed charcoal for black, one of three types of fixatives, i.e., the white of turtle eggs, wild honey and beeswax mixed together, and the particularly gelatinous sap of one of the tree orchids.

The ochres were crushed, mixed with water and one or more of the fixatives, and applied to the poles with brushes made from chewed strips of bark or vines (Fig. 2).

517 X 532 As I watched these primitive artists at work, I was impressed with the care they took in the arranging of their simple patterns, and with the obvious pleasure they experienced in their work. A quiet air of contentment pervaded the outdoor studio as each of the ten artists made his own pole as beautiful as possible.

Each artist appeared to be certain as to the designs he would use; there was no evidence of copying; in fact, *Pulanimbuwi* showed me the rough draft of the designs of his pole (Pl. 35A, B, Fig. 9), scratched on the back of a cigarette tin, days before he had even felled the tree.

X 532 765 A puzzling aspect of the *pukamuni* poles is the wide variety of the painted designs used, and the almost total absence in those designs of any reference to the myths and totemic localities.[9]

At first sight it would appear that the pole shapes, collected by both Fry and myself, were inventions of the moment. An analysis of the poles

174 412 322 have simpler shapes than at the present time, although Campbell (1834, p. 158) speaks about "poles with tops like lances and halberts". The aborigines may have used fire to assist in the shaping of the poles, in fact, this is suggested by Klaatsch (1907, p. 387).

[8] Not far from our camp was the deserted grave of the father of *Muramajau* (Pl. 38D), who died when his son was an infant. *Muramajau* was then over forty years old, yet the poles, although somewhat eroded and disarranged by the elements, are still in a fair state of preservation.

[111] [9] This and old *Tjamalampau's* statement, p. 109, could indicate that the poles and their designs are a recent cultural trait that is not yet fully absorbed into the culture.

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2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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A

B

C

D

PLATE 33. *Carved and Painted Burial Poles*
A, Poles at Old Grave; B, D, Painting Burial Poles; C, Cutting Burial Pole.

[p. 120 A]

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 O120 Tiwi O120

Personal Decoration.

Plaited armlets of vegetable fibre are worn on both arms, by both sexes, young and old. They are made of a number of central spiral turns of fibre, around which a single outer layer of flexible vegetable ribbon is plaited from either side and through the centre. The armlet is usually painted over with yellow ochre and is worn above the elbow. 301 [531]

Corrobboree-armlets are constructed in the shape of a flat ring of plaited vegetable fibre, from 10 to 20 centimetres in outside diameter (*vide* Plate XV, Figs. 4 and 6). The ring, which is from 2 to 3 centimetres wide and from a ½ to ¾ centimetre thick, is neatly coloured on the outside with ochre in a regular fashion. From a point on the circumference depends a bundle of from seven to fifteen twisted strings of animal or human hair, 30 centimetres long, which ends in a flat oval mass of beeswax, studded on the outside with red seeds of the "gequirity" or so-called "Northern Territory bean" (*Abrus praecatorius*). A similar mass of beeswax and beans surrounds the point of attachment of this tassel.

Special corrobboree arm-decorations[1] are constructed on rather more elaborate lines. A piece of bark (*Eucalyptus sp.*), about 66 centimetres long and 10 broad, is bent once upon itself into a simple loop and the open end kept together by stitching the edges for a distance of some 12 centimetres down (*vide* Plate VII, Figs. 2 and 4). The united end is fenestrated; one oblong space (measuring 6 by 2 centimetres) is cut out some 3 centimetres from the top, and beneath this, at a similar distance from its lower edge, two squares, whose sides are equivalent in length to the smaller side of the oblong. The top end of the united portion, and the top and bottom edges of the oblong and squares, are hemmed with an overlapping crossstitch. One side edge only of the loop is hemmed with a simple backward and forward "run-on" stitch. The lateral edges of the windows and the septum between the lower squares are fixed by transverse winding. The material used for hemming and winding is a light cane obtained from a creeping plant. It is evident that the different methods of stitching have to do with the fibrous structure of the bark; the cross-thread would tend to keep the stitches from pulling out along the fibres, as would be the case in straight up-and-down stitching. Additional complexity is given the ornament by eight thin sticks (about 15 centimetres long) which are pointed at both ends. One of these is stuck vertically into the bark at either end of the top edge. Two others pierce the bark at right angles, immediately below the lower outer corner of each square window; one of them being just below that corner of each of the squares, respectively. At either end of these transverse pieces, another stick is fixed vertically by binding with vegetable string, at about 3 centimetres from the ends. The ornament is coloured on the outside with red and white earth-paints. The ground colour of the upper half is red; the hem stitches and the affixed sticks are white. The lower half, or looped portion, bears four white transverse bands 301 322 301 531

[1] Apparently also used during mourning ceremonies.

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

301 bordered with red. Each of the intervening spaces is again sub-divided into two
531 squares at the centre (and a "half-square" at the sides) by three vertical, white lines bordered with red. The squares and "half-squares" are shaded diagonally with from four to six lines passing downwards and away from the central line in the topmost group, and upwards and away from the centre in the two lower groups of
[171] squares. The combined effect resembles the windmill or "wanningi" pattern common throughout Australia. The shading is all in white on one side, but red and white in alternate squares on the opposite side.

301 In another type of this arm decoration, which is also made of bark, the upper
322 united portion is shorter than in the previous case (*vide* Plate VII, Figs. 1 and 3). The top edge is concave and only one oblong window is cut beneath it. The sides have been united by hem-stitching and by the insertion of a few wooden pins which answer the same purpose as rivets. The edges are thickly plastered with beeswax. As in the previous case, the stitches (and the plaster also) are continued only along one side of the loop. A fairly stout rod of wood projects vertically from either end of the top concave edge. Shorter rods project laterally from either top corner of the loop. To the end of each of these rods a plume of
[237 white is attached with beeswax. Cockatoo feathers have been chosen and they are
531] fastened by their distal ends so that the fluffy portions are exposed. A number of twisted strands of fur and vegetable fibre pass from the extremity of one horizontal rod diagonally upwards to the base of the vertical rod above, along it to the top, thence horizontally across to the top of the other vertical rod, whence it is continued the same way down the other side to the extremity of the opposite horizontal rod. Beeswax retains these strands in position at the rod-tops, while more strands, wound horizontally from the base of one vertical rod to the other, and also round the base of each, make the former strands secure there. The painted design in this
301 case consists of one large cruciform figure on either side of the looped portion, the
531 arms being modified at the base in a manner suggestive of a snake design. One arm of the cross is white, the other yellow, both being bordered with red. The intervening spaces are shaded red and yellow, the constituent lines being parallel and straight up-and-down in the upper segment and crossed in the lower.

532 *Corrobboree-mask.*—An interesting object is what I take to be a corrobboree-mask (*vide* Plate XV, Fig. 5). As I did not see it in use and did not receive the specimen until it was too late to make inquiries, I cannot, with certainty, describe it as such. The object represents an oval structure, 15 centimetres long and 8 wide, which encloses two connected circular rims resembling a solid pair of spectacles. The internal framework is made of split cane, bound together with vegetable strands. The oval portion is covered with human hair string, wound around it and knotted along the outer edge after the modern "button-hole-stitch" fashion. The rims are broad and covered with beeswax. A circle of the red beans of *Abrus praecatorius*, embedded in the wax, surrounds the "eye-holes" on the front side. At one of the lateral extremities, a band of five human hair strings emerges from a cylindrical mass of beeswax and is surrounded, at 6 centimetres distance,

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

by a similar mass, whence two strings only continue for 40 odd centimetres. The whole length of the band, therefore, amounts to approximately 50 centimetres. Its object is, no doubt, to fasten the mask in position over the face during corroboree ceremonies.

Domestic Utensils.

Food carriers.—The most common form of "mika" or carrier for food and other articles is one made of a single piece of bark of the "stringy bark" eucalypt (*vide* Plate VIII, Figs. 3, 4, 5, and 6). An oblong piece of such bark, say 1 metre long by 40 centimetres broad, is freshly cut and folded transversely at its centre. The edges on either side are pared down, then laid flat, one over the other, and sewn or laced together with plain "run-on" stitches, 2 centimetres apart. A row of slanting and overlapping stitches often skirts the open edge at a short distance down; occasionally, too, part of the edge is cross-hemstitched and plastered with beeswax. The object of this procedure is to prevent the bark from tearing by virtue of its fibrous structure. The open mouth of the carrier is nearly circular or oval; in the latter case the long axis of the oval runs at right angles to the base-edge of the implement. These carriers are of various sizes; the largest that came under observation measured 63 centimetres in height and 43 in width at the base. Ordinarily they are unpainted, but on special occasions elaborate designs, consisting of circles, oblong and other figures, with cross-hatched shading, are drawn on the outer surface in red, yellow, white, and black. The designs are best studied by reference to the reproductions (*vide* Plate VIII, Figs. 5 and 6). Occasionally tassel-shaped appendages are noticed at one of the convex outer surfaces of the mouth of the carrier. These consist of a flattish, egg-shaped mass of beeswax (studded on the surface with the red beans of *Abrus praecatorius*), which is suspended by two twisted fur strings (*vide* Plate VIII, Fig. 6).

Water carriers.—Water is taken to camp from a soakage or spring in simple structures made out of the bark of the paper-bark tree (*Melaleuca sp.*). An oblong piece of this bark is bent upon itself longitudinally, both its ends folded several times and kept together by binding with cane or by spiking with short pointed wooden pegs (*vide* Plate VIII, Figs. 1 and 2).

Drinking vessels.—Several natural objects are used for drinking vessels. Among the most common are the discarded tests of mollusca. The species *Melo-diadema* and *Fusus pricei* were found in use at several native wells (*vide* Plate XIV, Figs. 1 and 2).

But when no such shells are available a piece of bark is torn or cut from a tree (usually from a *Melaleuca*) and folded so as to form a water-tight cup (*vide* Plate XIV, Figs. 3 and 4). This piece of bark, which measures about 30 centimetres by 20, is folded longitudinally at about its middle (*vide* Fig. 3, D). Both ends are then bent upon themselves at right angles to this plane and at about one quarter the whole length from either end. The overturned ends and the inner

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

piece of the former fold are clasped between the fingers and thus used as a cup the part lying opposite to the fingers being held to the lips.

Honey Eating.

In my notes on the north-western tribes of the Northern Territory I have described[1] a honey-collecting implement and there, also, referred to somewhat similar observations made by Dr. Wilson[2] and Keppel.[3]

On Bathurst Island I observed still another modification. A young flower-stalk of the fan-palm (*Livistonia humilis*), when about 50 to 70 centimetres long, is cut just above the trunk of the palm and its bottom end chewed until all the fibres are separated and look like the hairs of a brush. The juice, being quite sweet, is swallowed. The brush end is then inserted into the nest of the wild bee (*Trigona sp.*), whereby the honey gathers between the fibres. When saturated with honey, the brush end is passed back to the mouth and again sucked and chewed for a considerable time, after which it is once more returned to the honey for a fresh supply, and this is continued to repletion.

Tree Climbing.

Both male and female, young and old, are expert tree-climbers when in pursuit of game, honey of the wild bee, fruits, and seeds. As none of the trees on the islands grow to an abnormally large size, the butt is usually not too great in circumference to allow of the arms being thrown around it, so that the hands may obtain a firm hold on the side distant from the climber. Having obtained this hold while standing on the ground and facing the tree, the native jumps on to the butt, clutching it with the flat surfaces of his feet in a frog-like fashion. The knees in this position stand well outwards. The body hangs, suspended by the arms above and held against the tree by the legs below. The climber now raises his body; his hands quickly follow by a corresponding distance. Holding on with the latter he draws up his legs in a jumping manner once more to clutch the tree between the soles of his feet. This movement being repeated, he rapidly advances upwards.

Hunting and Fighting.

Throwing-sticks and clubs.—Several types of throwing-sticks and clubs are in use. They must be referred to under this general or collective heading, since it is hard to discriminate between the two implements and to say definitely where the throwing-stick ends and the club begins. They form an interesting group of Australian implements and weapons that allows of a satisfactory system of

[1] *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, vol. xxxi, 1907, p. 26, Fig. 19.
[2] *Narrative Voyage Round the World*, 1835, p. 99.
[3] *A Visit to Indian Archipelago*, 1853, vol. 2, p. 168.

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

level, further material has been cut away to reduce its thickness by about 1 centimetre all round. The top portion, which has the appearance of a knob, has been daubed with red ochre; the sunken portion, immediately beneath, is white (*vide* Plate XVII, Fig. 2). The lower surface of the post bears five vertical bands, three being of white pipe-clay and two of yellow ochre. Two of the former have a border of red, the third one of yellow; and both of the latter (yellow) are bordered with white. Three of the intervening spaces are shaded with inclined lines of white, the remaining two are each filled with a vertical row of white cricoid figures. The original surface upon which the pattern was drawn is charred.

Having persuaded the natives to repaint the designs on the tomb-posts, in places where they were defective or missing, they set about the work with enthusiasm and did not rest until they had repainted the whole of the surfaces. To accomplish this they leaned the posts against trees and divided themselves into small groups of two to four, each of which undertook part of the work (*vide* Plate XVI, Figs. 1 and 2). Youths were sent to the main camp, whence they soon after returned with lumps of red and yellow ochre and white pipe-clay (*vide* Plate XV, Fig. 2). From these they broke off small pieces and crushed them by hand in the strong concave shells of the bivalve mollusc *Cyrena essingtonensis*.[1] To this crumbled pigment sufficient water was added to make a thick paint, more water being added from time to time as required. One might look upon these shells containing the mixed paint as representing primitive palettes (*vide* Plate XV, Fig. 1). The paint is applied to the surface by means of crudely made, yet effective, brushes. Short pieces of the creeping calamus are cut with the sharp edge of a shell and one or both of their ends chewed until all the fibres have become separated (*vide* Plate XV, Fig. 3); much in the same way as the flower-stalks of the fan-palm are chewed when feeding on honey (*vide* p. 300). Both of these small artists' requisites are highly interesting inasmuch as they show us a decidedly primitive, yet to the present day practically unaltered stage in the evolution of art.

It is evident that the posts have been cut and carved with a sharp bladed instrument, in all probability a tomahawk. Captain Flinders[2] as far back as 1803 noticed that the natives on the north coast (Caledon Bay) were familiar with the use of iron instruments and that they tried to steal his axes. He, therefore, suspected that "they had been previously visited by people possessing iron instruments." Later, he was himself able to confirm this supposition when he discovered, near to Cape Wilberforce, a fleet of proas from Macassar, the crew of which were in the habit of visiting the north coast of Australia to collect trepang, which they took to Timor and sold to the Chinese.[2]

[1] We have before us an interesting analogy, when we recollect that in our own country the shells of fresh-water mussels were, in former days, much used and are still used as a receptacle for mixing water-colours; whence also the name *Unio pictorum*.

[2] *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, London, 1814, vol. ii, pp. 213 and 228–231.

123 sional patch of grass, which the rushing fire had missed, there was not a living green plant below the four-foot line. Burning the country is an annual occurrence and many are the laws governing 221 who may burn and who may subsequently hunt in the newly cleared 224 land. Because the fires are set each year, there is no accumulation of dry tinder to feed the fire and allow it to rage uncontrollably. Only the grass and a few fallen logs catch and these will burn rapidly and fiercely, but for a very short period. Any gap in the vegetation will stop the fire and the heavy dew, falling in the evening, will also put out the flames, leaving perhaps only isolated, smouldering logs to burn through the night. Until the first shoots of new grass push [421] their way through the charred ground, the individual hunter who set the fire has exclusive rights to the area he set alight. Of course, no one except those who belong to that country may burn without [671] permission of the owners. As far as possible, these laws are still upheld.

123 We soon came to a branch in the path and Albert indicated that we two girls should continue straight ahead; he would stop behind. In front of us stretched the fresh-water swamp. Out of the almost inky but clear water rose the gnarled paperbark trees, their roots so intertwined they almost formed a floor, albeit a most slippery and irregular one, over the rotten vegetation in the bottom of the swamp. I picked a particularly large rooted tree for my bath [515] tub, and a short distance away Agnes did the same. If one was careful not to disturb the fine deposit on the bottom but managed to stay on top of the slippery roots, the clear cool water was as sweet and soft as one could wish for. We stayed for about an hour, washing ourselves and our clothes, but finally an impatient call from Albert put an end to this pleasure. Albert had been hunting for a possum, but in this area so close to the camp, they had already been depleted.

123 Instead of returning to camp, Albert decided that now was as 411 good a time as any to cut his *milingani*, the sticks with which they kill the geese. After another mile or so into the bush, we came to a 322 grove of stout bushes of a kind I had not seen before. They had [223] long, straight branches of about a half-inch diameter. These Albert

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 OI20 Tiwi OI20

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Fig. 13. Gathering water-lilies in a fresh-water swamp

cut and after he had collected about thirty he selected a nice, smooth ledge of rock in the shade to work further on the sticks. First he stripped the bark, then measuring them against his arm he cut them so that each stick was as long as the distance from his fingertips to his elbow. All this he did with his knife, holding it by the tip of its long blade so that the handle would add its weight to each blow. He carefully smoothed off the two ends so there were no loose splinters. We each took a bundle of these sticks, tied them with strips of pandanus, and returned to the camp. Here they were laid in the water close to the bank and weighted down with a rock. This would make them good and heavy, it was explained.

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During the afternoon, the two men worked on the permanent house which Bill Grimster had ordered. Big Jack had spent the morning cutting posts and had brought in about half a dozen. By late afternoon, when the others returned, they had been set upright in holes dug to individual measure so that they stood firm without bracing.

Once everyone had returned, a fire was built. The men collected their individual bundles of *milingani* and placed the ends of the dripping sticks in the flames. They squatted over the sticks and individually started a chant during which they cupped their hands in the smoke and carrying it to their bodies, slapped their necks, then their arms. "Knar. Knar Gerra doo (slap), Gerra doo (slap)." The chant was nothing more than the imitation of the cries of the geese and the whir of the sticks. They explained that to bring the goose down they had to hit it directly on the neck or wings. "Why

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Fig. 14. "Cooking milingani"

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do you cook the sticks?" I asked. "To make them dry so they won't slip in our hands," they replied.

Once the sticks were all well charred on the ends the men took them down to the canoe. For once, I used my status of ethnographer and overruled my role of a woman, and accompanied the men on what was properly men's business. The presence of women or children might bring bad luck. Whether the explanation was simply that women and children are considered to be lacking in the amount of silence or immobility required, or whether the reason was more subtle, I never found out. "This properly men's business," was the only explanation.

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We took the canoe a quarter of a mile up stream, where we

171 boomerang, is unknown to the islanders. Ceremonial customs,
[411] language, origin, and burial rites all differ from those of the mainland tribes, and constitute an interesting study for anthropologists. They are the only aborigines who erect memorials on
764 the graves of the departed, and, in the forest beside the aerodrome, you may see a typical grave surrounded with queerly-
[322 carved ironwood totem-poles. The poles, some eight feet in height, are carved in varying patterns. They had been painted
532] in highly decorative designs with red, yellow, and white ochre, with black bands of charcoal to give sharp and artistic contrast. Each kindred totem to that of the deceased must place a pole at the grave. Failure to erect a pole is supposed to signify that no sorrow is felt for the death, and punishment will follow. Something unpleasant always *does* happen to those who neglect this duty.

1797 AFTER these necessary digressions, let us return to my visit to the mission station. We followed the fathers over the stile,
[245] up an avenue of palms, and on through the garden, where pineapples and bananas grow, and there are rows of immense and beautifully shady mango-trees. Sturdy, fuzzy-headed
[262] aborigines strode in front (one of them had just come in with a couple of kangaroos for the larder), and the boys trooped along behind us. The quarters of the fathers are very much those of bachelors, perfectly bare, with guns in the corners and a few native weapons and curios hanging on the walls.

Here two lubras brought us morning tea, and here I learnt much of the foregoing matters. The fathers themselves are entertaining men of the world, and their white cricket shirts and khaki slacks gave no indication of their calling. The boys
797 gathered at the foot of the steps leading up to the quarters,
522 and every now and then black-bearded Father McGrath would banter them in their own language. Like all the native peoples

[p. 15 (B)]